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103

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

Memorandum

State Department review
completed

NSA review completed



THE SITUATION IN VIETNAM

Information as of 1600
30 September 1966

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PREPARED FOR THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
FURTHER DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION
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30 September 1966

HIGHLIGHTS

In the continued fighting just south of the DMZ, US Marines seized a Communist command post. [REDACTED]

25X1

25X1

I. The Military Situation in South Vietnam:
US Marines seized a Communist command post near the DMZ as Operation PRAIRIE continues to sweep northern Quang Tri Province in search of the 324B North Vietnamese Army Division (Para. 1). A total of 40 Communist troops have been killed in two days in Binh Dinh Province (Para. 2). US troops, participating in Operation BATON ROUGE, located and destroyed a Viet Cong base camp which included a mine factory (Para. 3). Two South Vietnamese outposts near Quang Ngai were overrun but later recaptured yesterday (Para. 4).

II. Political Developments in South Vietnam:
The first working session of the constituent assembly reportedly established a credentials committee (Para. 1).

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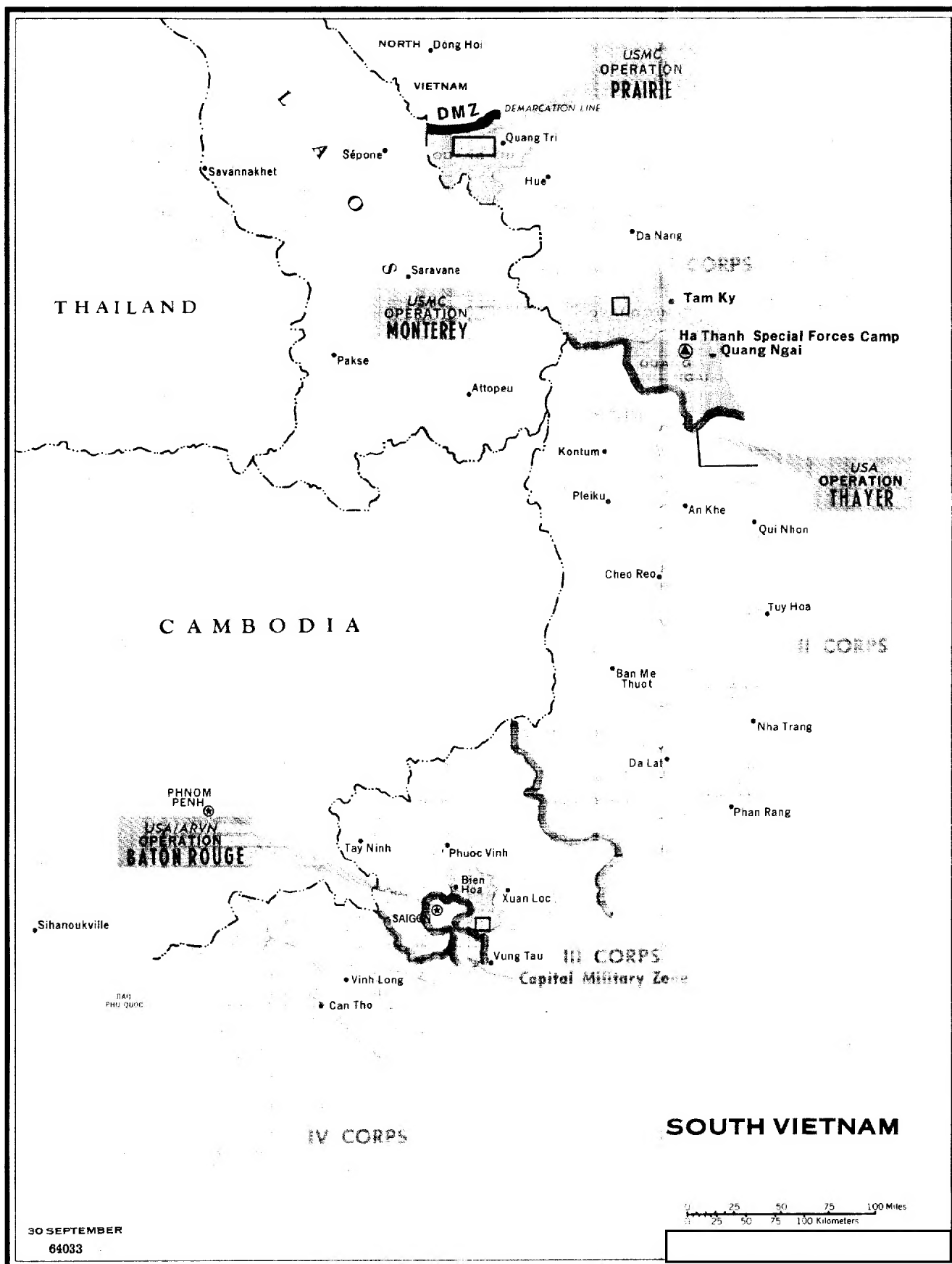
III. Military Developments in North Vietnam:
There is nothing of significance to report.

25X1

25X1

Hanoi launches new propaganda campaign urging population to work harder in support of the war (Para. 2). A Soviet diplomat has attempted to feel out US views on the role of the Liberation Front in a postwar settlement (Paras. 3-4)

30 September 1966



I. THE MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. US Marines participating in Operation PRAIRIE in northernmost Quang Tri Province with support from allied artillery fire and tactical air strikes seized a North Vietnamese command post just south of the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) early today. A total of 51 Communist troops were reported killed during the US Marine drive to clear the entrenched enemy troops from a position which protected infiltration routes from the North. One American was wounded in the action.

2. One company of the US 1st Cavalry Division participating in Operation THAYER in the northern part of coastal Binh Dinh Province encountered a Viet Cong force of unknown size early today. The American forces were supported by airborne rocket artillery fire. There were no American casualties; a total of 14 Viet Cong were killed. Yesterday, armed helicopters strafed Viet Cong troops caught in an open field. US pilots reported killing 26 enemy soldiers in this engagement.

3. US soldiers participating in Operation BATON ROUGE, a two-battalion US - South Vietnamese search-and-destroy operation in Bien Hoa Province, located two Viet Cong base camps yesterday. One of these camps contained a mine factory. Forty mine-making devices were destroyed. Also found and destroyed were 2,000 pounds of rice, 20 pounds of salt, 350 grenades, 100 sheets of tin and copper, and two sampans. Cumulative casualties for this operation which began on 3 September are three friendly troops killed and 13 wounded. A total of 44 Viet Cong have been killed.

30 September 1966

I-1

Approved For Release 2006/03/17 : CIA-RDP79T00826A001300010009-2

4. Two South Vietnamese outposts adjacent to the Ha Thanh Special Forces Camp about 15 miles west of Quang Ngai city in coastal Quang Ngai Province were overrun by a Viet Cong force of unknown size yesterday. Seven hours later both outposts were reoccupied by friendly forces. South Vietnamese losses included 12 killed, 6 wounded, and 25 weapons and one radio captured. Enemy losses are unknown.

5. Operation MONTEREY, a one-battalion US Marine search-and-destroy operation in an area about 35 miles west of Tam Ky in Quang Tin Province, ended early today. This one-day operation ended without casualties, although one Viet Cong suspect was detained.

30 September 1966

I-2

Approved For Release 2006/03/17 : CIA-RDP79T00826A001300010009-2

II. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. The first working meeting of the newly elected constituent assembly was held on 30 September. According to press accounts, the delegates selected a committee to examine the credentials of some 20 assembly winners whose seats have been contested. Resolutions on the war, to be sent to the United Nations and to the Philippine summit conference of seven nations next month, were also discussed. The status of those reported resolutions, along with one other which requested the government to release more political prisoners, has not been confirmed, however, by official sources.

25X1

30 September 1966

II-1

III. MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS IN NORTH VIETNAM

1. There is nothing of significance to report.

30 September 1966

III-1

25X1

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Next 1 Page(s) In Document Exempt

Approved For Release 2006/03/17 : CIA-RDP79T00826A001300010009-2

V. COMMUNIST POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

25X1

2. Hanoi has followed up its denunciation of recent US peace proposals with a warning to its own people to expect a long war and additional personal sacrifices. The Communist Party central committee has called for a new nationwide propaganda campaign making the people aware that the fighting will probably get worse in the coming year and will require renewed efforts on the part of the entire population. The campaign is essentially an appeal to patriotism. A party daily editorial on 29 September reminded the people that defeat means the loss of freedom and their country, and claimed that keeping up production and providing additional assistance to the Viet Cong in the face of an increase in the intensity of the war effort, requires that each individual double his present efforts.

30 September 1966

V-1

25X1

3. On 29 September Ivan A. Koulikov, second secretary of the Soviet Embassy in London, during a conversation with a US diplomat, attempted to feel out the US view on the role of the NFLSV in the political life of South Vietnam once foreign troops were withdrawn. He said Hanoi would not attend any conference until certain things had been firmly agreed to.

4. The most important of these prior understandings would be some assurance of the continued existence of the NLF and its participation in the political life in SVN after foreign forces had withdrawn. He added that agreement on actual withdrawal would be relatively easy since this is "not a major problem." He went on, however, to say that Hanoi was bound to ask whether the eventual agreement would be worth the immense sacrifices of the Vietnamese people. In any event he asserted it was obviously not satisfactory from the DRV point of view to return to the status quo prior to the introduction of foreign troops.

5. According to the US diplomat, Koulikov tried to give the impression that he was speaking for more than himself, and expressed an eagerness to meet again soon and talk "frankly and realistically."

30 September 1966

V-2

TOP SECRET

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